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AUTHOR Berryman, Cynthia L.; Weaver, Richard L., II
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ABSTRACT

Speech departments from 658 colleges and universities completed questionnaires in an investigation of the status, philosophy, content, methods, and materials of the interpersonal communication course as it is currently being taught. The study revealed that there is a consistent pattern in the nature of interpersonal courses. Generally, they are 100-level courses, taught independently by regular full-time staff members, and offered for three credit hours with five sections of the course offered each semester, each section with from 23 to 30 students. The course philosophy is predominantly humanistic-behavioristic with instructors devoting a majority of class time directly to interpersonal communication. Little overall time is given to intrapersonal and small group communication, communication theory, and public speaking. The survey indicated that most instructors approach a balance between theory and performance. This balance is reflected in the use of both written examinations and class participation as methods for determining student grades, which are generally determined by the instructor, not by the students. The investigation supports the idea that although interpersonal communication courses are new, they appear to have gained a strong foothold in college and university speech curricula. (Tables of findings are included.) (FL)

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A SURVEY OF THE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION COURSE AT U.S. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

by

Cynthia L. Berryman

and

Richard L. Weaver, II

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A SURVEY OF THE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION COURSE AT U.S. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The burgeoning interest in interpersonal communication instruction has developed within the last five years. As late as 1972, Wise notes the new emergence of interpersonal communication in the speech-communication discipline.[1] Stewart predicts that "interpersonal communication might become as common to college freshmen and sophomores of the seventies as public speaking has been to undergraduate students of the fifties and sixties."[2] In the same year (1972) Ilardo discusses whether interpersonal communication is merely a fad.[3] Virtually all that has been written about interpersonal communication instruction appears in the literature of the last five years.[4] While many of these articles propose philosophies, teaching methods, course content, and evaluation procedures to be incorporated in interpersonal communication courses, there is still little agreement about what constitutes a course in interpersonal communication. Pearce contends from his analysis of various approaches to teaching interpersonal communication that "there is little consensus about what interpersonal communication is or at least what ought to go into a course about it."[5] Work reviews ERIC materials on interpersonal communication and concludes that speech educators disagree on what should be incorporated into interpersonal communication courses.[6] Ritter contends that it is difficult to speak with great precision about "the" interpersonal communication curriculum.[7]

Because the study of interpersonal communication represents a new area within our discipline, and because of the lack of a well-developed conceptualization of the interpersonal communication course, there arises a need for

concrete information about the status of the interpersonal communication course at U.S. colleges and universities. This study reports the status, philosophy, content, methods, and materials of the interpersonal course as it is currently taught at U.S. colleges and universities. We sought to answer the question, "What are the current practices in interpersonal communication?"

PURPOSE

The purpose of this survey was to determine the nature of the interpersonal course as it is currently taught and to establish and define what the course looks like today. Specifically, information was sought on course enrollment, level, staffing, philosophy, content or topics covered, and format. In addition, we sought information on instructional materials and methods, testing procedures, supervisory and teaching problems, as well as textbooks used. For the purpose of this study, the interpersonal course was broadly defined as "basic level or upper level undergraduate courses in interpersonal communication."

PROCEDURE

The investigators began by requesting a copy of the questionnaire used in the Gibson, Kline, and Gruner examination of the first course in speech.[8] After extensive modification, a revised questionnaire was sent to the Speech Communication Association Educational Policies Board. Further modification and revision occurred to include items that Board members believed would provide important information.

With the sponsorship of the School of Speech Communication at Bowling Green State University and the assistance of the Speech Communication Association, the investigators distributed a 50-item questionnaire in October 1977.

It was mailed to the 2700 schools and colleges on the SCA mailing list of all junior and senior college and university speech-communication departments. The definition of the interpersonal communication course appeared at the top of the first page of the questionnaire. Instructions on the questionnaire asked respondents to fold the questionnaire to reveal the return address and postage-paid permit, to insert the IBM answer sheet, and to staple and mail the completed questionnaire.

The deadline for submission of the completed questionnaire was November 15, 1977. By January 1978, usable forms were received from 638 colleges and universities (24 percent of the schools contacted). Although this percentage appears low, it is important to note that of the 2700 colleges and universities on the SCA mailing list, many of those listed are not actually speech departments. The list includes names of people affiliated with communication disorders, theatre, and mass communication as well as interpersonal and public communication. It was used, however, because it was an efficient and inexpensive means of dispersing the questionnaire. Gibson, Kline, and Gruner also point out that the list includes "departments of some other subject area or institutions which, at some time, have expressed interest in SCA."[9]

Space on the questionnaire was provided for the respondent to indicate if that institution offered no interpersonal course. Of the 638 responses received, 250 (39%) indicated they do not offer an interpersonal course: 388 (61%) offer such a course.

Answers to the 47 categorical-response items were subjected to computer analysis according to the SPSS frequencies program.[10] Results of the four open-ended response items were tabulated, summarized, and analyzed. On the basis of these analyses, valid generalizations and inferences can be made about the status and character of the interpersonal communication course in American colleges and universities.

RESULTS

Demographic Information

Questionnaire items about the size of the institution, institutional affiliation, and type of school (private, state, or church) indicate that we received the largest number of responses from state-supported universities and four-year colleges with student enrollments from 1000-4999. Institutions with student enrollments of this size represented 38% of the responses while 21.5% of the respondents represented institutions with enrollments below 1000. Institutions with enrollments of 5000-9999 were represented by 19% of the respondents and only 8.8% represented institutions with enrollments in excess of 20,000. The largest percentage of our response (78.5%) came from schools with enrollments below 10,000.

With respect to institutional affiliation and type of school, most of our respondents came from state-supported schools (63.2%). The remaining 37% were almost evenly divided between private schools (18.5%) and church-affiliated schools (18.3%). More than 70% came from universities (38.4%) and four-year colleges (32.1%) and close to 30% came from community colleges (29.5%). Also, concerning the type of school represented, 73% of the respondents stated that their school is on a semester system. The largest portion of remaining respondents represented schools on the quarter system (23.7%) while only a small fraction indicated the trimester system (3.3%).

Status Information

The questionnaire included items about whether or not the course is required, whether it is an option that students can elect from among several communication-related courses, and whether enrollments are gaining or losing. Results indicate that arts and sciences students are those who are most often required to take the interpersonal course, but that they can elect it from

among several communication-related courses. Well over half of the respondents stated that over the past three years there has been a gain in interpersonal enrollments.

Although arts and sciences students may be those most often required to take interpersonal communication (36.6%), respondents also indicated the course is required almost equally by all or some students in education (28.4%), humanities (26.3%), pre-professional programs (24%), and business (23.7%). In most cases, however, students elect the course from among several communication-related courses (55.9%). About one fourth of the respondents (24%) stated the course was not an option. In addition, 18.3% of the respondents indicated that sometimes students can elect the course.

Support for the fact that the course is growing came from 57.5% of the respondents who reported a gain in interpersonal enrollments over the past three years. Just over one-third (37.5%) indicated that course enrollments have remained constant over this same time period. A mere 5.1% stated that enrollments have dropped off somewhat.

Course Information

The questionnaire included items about the level of the course, credit hours given, and the number and size of the sections. The data revealed that the course is predominantly a 100-level, 3-credit course, that is usually one of less than five sections offered during a term, and composed of 23-30 students. It was also demonstrated that the course is primarily instructed by regular full-time staff.

Over sixty percent (61.9%) indicated that their interpersonal communication course is offered at the 100 level. Just over one quarter of the respondents offer the course at the 200 level (26.8%), and only 16% offer it at the 300 or 400 level. Some of those responding also indicated the course is offered at more than one level.

Over sixty percent of the respondents (68.0%) also indicated that three credit hours are given for the course. About ten percent offer a two-credit course while 13.9% of the respondents offer a one-credit course. The interpersonal course is seldom offered for one credit (2.1%) or for five credits (4.6%).

That 70.3% of respondents indicated that less than five sections of the course are offered each term reveals that the course is in its formative, growth period. Only 26% stated that sections offered each quarter numbered 6-20 with 14.1% indicating 6-10, 8.5%, 11-15, and 3.5% stating 16-20. An additional 3.7% said that more than 20 sections per term are offered.

The typical section of the interpersonal course, according to this survey, enrolls 18-30 students (64.8%). Only 25.9% said the average number of students in their lab sections was less than 17 and a mere 9.4% said the average number amounted to more than 30 students. Most sections enrolled 23-30 students (38.4%), a figure slightly higher than the 17-22 range for the basic course in speech as reported in 1970,[11] and significantly higher than the 18-22 range for public-speaking classes as reported in 1974.[12] Additionally, class size was reported as the most important supervision problem (22 schools reported it) and the third most important teaching problem (as reported by 55 respondents). (See Tables 8 and 9.)

Because less than five sections of the course are offered each term, one would expect that sections would be staffed by regular full-time staff; over 80% of interpersonal courses are so instructed. Only 10.6% of the respondents indicated that part-time instructors engage in the bulk of the teaching; 7.0% stated that graduate students carry the major teaching load while only 4.9% use primarily undergraduate students to handle the teaching of the interpersonal course.

Content Information

Questionnaire items 13 through 25 pertained to the basic philosophy of the course, the areas emphasized, and the topics covered. The basic philosophy of the course is clearly a humanistic-behavioristic combination. Instructors tend to place about 10% of their emphasis on each of the areas of intrapersonal, small-group, and public communication. Also, about 10% of their time is devoted to communication theory. The bulk of what remains is given to the process of interpersonal communication specifically. The ten most often selected topics to which some amount of time is given (in decending order) are verbal communication, nonverbal communication, feedback, self-concept, barriers to communication, listening, perception, self-disclosure, empathy, and communication models.

In the first category, teachers were asked what is their basic approach to or philosophy of the interpersonal course. A humanistic orientation was selected by 25.5% of the respondents; only 10.1% selected a behavioristic orientation. Over 50% selected humanistic-behavioristic (56.7%) and 5.9% said their approach was something other than these.

Over two-thirds of the respondents indicated that intrapersonal communication is given a 10% emphasis in their interpersonal course (67%). Less than 60% said that small-group communication was given a 10% emphasis in their course. Only 45% said that public speaking was given a 10% emphasis. Over 60% give communication theory a 10% emphasis. It is clear from these emphases that we are dealing with an interpersonal course and not a hybrid course or a public-speaking course. If the course to which respondents referred were a hybrid course (including equal amounts of interpersonal, small group, and public speaking) one would expect the greatest number of responses in the 30% categories. This did not occur. Over one-third of the respondents give over 60%

emphasis to interpersonal communication; 26% give 50% emphasis; over one-third give 30% emphasis to interpersonal. Well over half of the respondents, then, give 50% or better emphasis to this area. See Table 1.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

One question the investigators sought to answer was, is "interpersonal communication" a new label some use for traditional public-speaking courses? Clearly, this is not the case. Interpersonal communication is an animal very distinct in respondents' minds from public communication. This was emphasized by the fact that 182 (47%) respondents did not answer the question on public-speaking emphasis. We are pleased to report that interpersonal communication is more than a mere cosmetic change from traditional public-speaking courses.

The investigators attempted to delineate topics incorporated in the interpersonal course. Thirty-four topics were offered for response. See Table 2 for the percentage of responses each topic received. It is not unexpected that the most frequently selected topics are also those that often form chapter titles in the most frequently-used textbooks.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

Instructional Materials and Methods

Questionnaire items 26 through 32 related to the format of the course, the ratio of theory and performance, and the course materials and methods used in the course. A free-response item at the end of the questionnaire solicited information about textbooks. Concerning format, the largest percentage of interpersonal courses (79.1%) are taught as independent sections. The ratio of theory to performance in these courses tends to be about 50/50, and those course

materials or methods that received the largest number of responses are (in decending order) handouts, examinations, exercises and games, syllabi, and supplementary readings. As reported in Table 4, textbooks by Adler and Towne, Brooks and Emmert, DeVito, and Stewart, as well as the Giffin and Patton books, appear to be used more frequently than others.

The investigators sought to determine the popularity of the mass lecture in interpersonal communication. Only 2.5%, or nine individuals, stated that the mass-lecture format is used. Although 79.1% stated that the independent section is the format, 18.5% stated that they use both independent and live lectures. Of those who use the mass-lecture format, six individuals stated they use the video-tape approach as opposed to the live presentation.

The largest percentage of respondents indicated that the ratio of theory to performance in the basic course is 50/50 (24.0%); however, the percentage of respondents in each category did not differ dramatically. For example, those who stated the percentage was 40% theory to 60% performance was 20.6%; those who said the percentage was 30% theory to 70% performance was 19.8%. Those who said the ratio was 20% theory to 80% performance was 15.7% and at the other end, those who said the ratio was 60% theory to 40% performance was 18.3%. There appears to be very little consistency in the approach. Interestingly, achieving this balance between theory and performance appears to be the eighth most often reported supervisory problem (reported by 10 people) and the ninth most often reported teaching problem (reported by 29 people). Obviously, from the responses to the question on the ratio of theory to performance, respondents are uncertain as to which ratio is most appropriate, workable, or suitable.

The investigators provided respondents with a choice of 20 different materials and methods. Table 3 reveals the number of responses in each category. It is interesting to note that the most popular course material used,

handouts, were also the most popular used in connection with the basic course in 1974.[13]

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

It is also interesting to notice that just as many people who depend on exercises and games as course material also use examinations to test their students. This not only supports the 50/50 balance of theory and performance, but also suggests that the cognitive and affective domains are receiving near-equal emphasis.

Item 49 asked the respondent to list the required textbooks currently being used in the interpersonal course. Table 4 lists the most often reported textbooks. A number of schools reported using more than one book. Approximately 238 (67%) use only one book; 70 (20%) use two books; 17 (5%) use three books; and 10 schools (or 3%) reported using four or more titles. The variety of other responses we received to this question included schools that use no books, schools that leave the decision in the hands of the individual instructor, schools where the decision varies from term to term, and still others that felt the question was not appropriate--with no reason stated.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

Evaluation and Grading Information

Questionnaire items 33 through 38 treated evaluation and grading methods. We also wanted to know the extent to which interpersonal instructors depend on cognitive knowledge, as opposed to skills development, for determining grades. Finally, we wanted to know approximately how grades are distributed (from A through F) in the course. Evaluation by instructors is accomplished, for the

most part, by using both normative- and criterion-based methods. The most heavily used grading method is the written examination. The students' grade in the course is determined primarily by the teacher (80.6%) as opposed to peers or the students themselves. The largest percentage of respondents indicated a 60/40 ratio of cognitive knowledge to skills development with 60 for cognitive and 40 for skills. This would support instructors' dependence on written examinations. As far as the actual grades given in the course, instructors tend to give less than 19% A's, approximately 20-39% B's, 20-39% C's, and less than 19% D's and F's.

Only 5.0% of those responding to the survey stated they use a normative-based evaluation method. More than a third (36.2%) stated that they use a criterion-based method, but 58.8% use both methods.

By far the most used method for testing students in interpersonal courses is the written examination (82.7%). Class participation is the next most-used method. Classroom exercises and classroom presentations are used by about two-thirds of the respondents. See Table 5 for the number of schools reporting use of the other grading methods. It is impressive to see the number of schools reporting the use of the oral examination and the contract method. Both these grading methods require an extensive commitment of time and energy on the part of the instructor.

INSERT TABLE 5 HERE

Table 6 reveals that the reins of control of the students' grades remain predominantly in the hands of the instructor. The interpersonal communication course has not changed the traditional form of authority in the classroom. It is interesting to note that sometimes (as revealed in Table 6) a student's peers have input into the grading process. The students themselves also affect that

decision. As noted in the Table, 42.4% of the respondents indicated that students have approximately 10% control over that grade.

INSERT TABLE 6 HERE

Over 60% of the respondents indicated that the ratio of cognitive knowledge to skills development exceeds 50% emphasis on cognitive knowledge with a corresponding decline in skills development. One-quarter stated that the ratio was 50/50; 15.2% (a significant drop) indicated the ratio was 40% on cognitive knowledge and 60% on skills; 16.8% said the ratio was 30/70, and only 7.0% stated that the ratio was 20 on cognitive knowledge and 80 on skills. There is no indication, from these figures, that the interpersonal classroom is or has become a laboratory for fun and games.

Table 7 reveals that the distribution of grades in interpersonal communication is not significantly different from other courses. It appears that the emphasis tends to be on the grade of B, with 77.1% of the respondents indicating that they award approximately 20-39% B's in their course.

INSERT TABLE 7 HERE

Administration and Staffing

The investigators were not only interested in the autonomy given to instructors in the course, but also in the consistency between sections, the satisfaction expressed by them, and some of the problems they face. To determine problems, we asked two open-ended questions, one having to do with supervising the course, the other having to do with problems in teaching the course.

A very large number of respondents indicated a great deal of autonomy was provided (84.8%). This would be a likely response because the course format is, for the most part, independent sections staffed with regular full-time faculty. Indicating moderate autonomy were 16.0% of the respondents; only 5.2% selected the "little" autonomy choice.

About half of the respondents stated that all sections of the interpersonal course were consistent as far as standard topics, assignments, and expectations were concerned (47.5%). About half (46.1%) stated that some consistency existed; 6.4% said none existed. These facts should be considered in light of the responses to the item concerning how many sections are offered per term. Generally, respondents stated that less than 5 sections are offered at a time; thus, consistency would not seem to be as difficult a problem as in a large multi-section basic-communication course. For supervisors of the course, however, it was ranked as the second most often reported problem. Because the course is staffed with regular full-time staff who indicate the existence of a great deal of autonomy, one can sympathize with the supervisors' problems.

Schools report great satisfaction among the staff (56.7%) with respect to the interpersonal course. About one-third of the schools said they experienced moderate satisfaction; 3.1% expressed little satisfaction; 5.2% said they experienced no satisfaction at all. With 90% of the schools revealing either moderate or great satisfaction, the prognosis looks good.

Table 8 lists the most often reported supervision problems and the number of schools reporting them. Rather than reporting items that are peculiar or unique to supervising interpersonal-communication courses, those in the supervisory role have listed problems that are major educational

stumbling blocks for all courses that are multi-sectional in nature. The two problems listed there that may have some uniqueness are the problems of determining grading criteria, because of the difficulty in grading interpersonal skills or judging interpersonal competency, and the problem of balancing theory and skills.

INSERT TABLE 8 HERE

Table 9 lists the most often reported teaching problems and the number of schools reporting them. Notice that the problems of class size and time appear as problems both in teaching and supervising the interpersonal course. Also, the problems of time and class size are identical to two of the top three problems listed in 1974 with reference to the basic-communication course.[14]

INSERT TABLE 9 HERE

Several of the teaching and supervising problems may result from the fact that the interpersonal course has developed within the last several years. For example, under supervision, one would expect supervisors to have problems with maintaining consistency, securing quality teaching staff, determining course content, determining grading standards and criteria, balancing theory and skills, selecting a textbook, and finding quality materials. All of these items are also listed as teaching problems with the following items reported as additional problems which would occur because the course is relatively new: confronting student expectations and attitudes about the course, applying exercises to interpersonal theory, motivating students to see the practical applicability of the course, establishing appropriate class atmosphere, providing interpersonal-communication models, and coping with terminology.

It would be assumed that many of these problems will be worked out, or given less emphasis, as the course progresses.

CONCLUSIONS

There appears to be a consistent pattern concerning the nature of interpersonal-communication courses at U.S. colleges and universities. They are predominantly 100-level courses, taught independently by regular full-time staff members, offered for three-credit hours, with approximately 23-30 students per section. Less than five sections of the course are offered per term.

Basic philosophy and topics covered in the interpersonal course also reveal consistency. The course philosophy is predominantly humanistic-behavioristic. Instructors devote little overall time to intrapersonal and small-group communication, communication theory, and public speaking. They focus a majority of time directly on interpersonal communication. Topics selected for coverage reveal its interpersonal focus: verbal, nonverbal, feedback, self-concept, barriers to communication, listening, perception, self-disclosure, and empathy.

Although instructors report problems in striving for a balance between theory and performance, survey results indicate most instructors approach a 50/50 balance between them. This balance is reflected in the frequent use of both written examinations and class participation as methods for determining student grades in the course. Additionally, grades are determined predominantly by the instructor of the course as opposed to students' peers or the students themselves.

Despite the fact that interpersonal communication is new and that several problems accompany this newness, the interpersonal-communication course appears

to have gained a strong foothold. Of those responding to our survey, close to 100% report that interpersonal-course enrollments appear to be stable or gaining. Also, 90% of the respondents report moderate or great satisfaction among the teaching staff.

As part of our higher educational curriculum, interpersonal communication is secure. It is very likely that Stewart's prediction that it might "become as common to college freshmen and sophomores of the seventies as public speaking has been to undergraduate students of the fifties and sixties,"[15] will, indeed, become true. It is definitely not a fad; it has already become an inherent and required part of arts and sciences, education, humanities, pre-professional, and business programs.

This survey indicates that there is some consensus about the nature of interpersonal communication, that speech educators tend to agree about its content, and that we can now speak with some precision about the interpersonal-communication course. It is gaining stature in the Speech-Communication discipline and its outlook seems positive and bright.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Charles N. Wise, "A Prolegomena to a Study of the Antecedents of Interpersonal Communication," Today's Speech, 20 (Fall 1972), 59-64.

[2] John Stewart, "An Interpersonal Approach to the Basic Course," Speech Teacher, 21 (January 1972), 7-14.

[3] Joseph A. Ilardo, "Why Interpersonal Communication?," Speech Teacher, 21 (January 1972), 1-6.

[4] See for example: Wise, 59-64; Stewart, 7-14; Ilardo, 1-6; John J. Makay, "A Problem of Transfer from the Interpersonal Communication Course (Or Any Other) to the Real World - What's the Hang-Up?," SCA Convention, 1972 (ED 071 117); Fred E. Jandt, "Approaches to Teaching Interpersonal Communication," New York Speech Association Convention, 1973 (ED 088 119); Hazel Heiman, "Teaching Interpersonal Communication," North Dakota Speech & Theatre Association Convention, 1973 (ED 097 745); Arthur P. Bochner and Clifford W. Kelly, "Interpersonal Competence: Rationale, Philosophy, and Implementation of a Conceptual Framework," Speech Teacher, 23 (November 1974), 279-301; Donald P. Cushman and B. Thomas Florence, "The Development of Interpersonal Communication Theory," Today's Speech, 22 (Fall 1974), 11-15; Fred E. Jandt, "Why Interpersonal Communication? - Round II," Today's Speech, 22 (Winter 1974), 37-39; Cassandra Book, "A Rationale and Application of Contract Grading for Use in the Interpersonal Communication Course," Central States Speech Association Convention, 1974 (ED 090 612); Pamela A. Reagor and Lynda W. Warren, "On Being Real: In Praise of Interpersonal Communication," Western Psychological Association Convention, 1974 (ED 105 328); Charles M. Rossiter, Jr., "Instruction in

Metacommunication," Central States Speech Journal, 25 (Spring 1974), 36-42; Thomas R. Tortoriello and Lynn A. Phelps, "Can Students Apply Interpersonal Theory?" Today's Speech, 23 (Fall 1975), 45-49; Daniel B. Wackman and Sherod Miller, "Education in Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills," ICA Convention, 1975 (ED 106 892); Al R. Weitzel, "The Dyadic Exchange: A Useful Exercise in Teaching Interpersonal Communication," 1975 (ED 103 924); Beverly A. Gaw, "The Johari Window and a Partnership: An Approach to Teaching Interpersonal Communication Skills," Communication Education, 25 (September 1976), 252-255; Sue DeWine, "The Communication Journal: A New Tool for Building Interpersonal Relationships in the Communication Classroom," ICA Convention, 1976 (CS 501 508); James H. Flynn and Dwight A. Williams, Jr., "The Unstructured Group in the Interpersonal Communication Course," Central States Speech Journal, 27 (Spring 1976), 36-41; Arthur P. Bochner and Janet Yerby, "Factors Affecting Instruction in Interpersonal Competence," Communication Education, 26 (March 1977), 91-103; W. Barnett Pearce, "Teaching Interpersonal Communication as a Humane Science: A Comparative Analysis," Communication Education, 26 (March 1977), 104-112; Jane Work, "Interpersonal Communication? Of Course! (And Courses)," ERIC Report, Communication Education, 26 (March 1977), 138-142; Ellen M. Ritter, "Accountability for Interpersonal Communication Instruction: A Curricular Perspective," Central States Speech Journal, 28 (Fall 1977), 204-213.

[5] Pearce, 105.

[6] Work, 139.

[7] Ritter, 205.

[8] James W. Gibson, John A. Kline, and Charles R. Gruner, "A Re-Examination of the First Course in Speech at U.S. Colleges and Universities," Speech Teacher, 23 (September 1974), 206-214.

[9] Gibson, et. al., 207.

[10] Norman H. Nie, C. Hadlai Hull, Jean G. Jenkins, Karen Steinbrenner, and Dale H. Bent, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, 2nd. ed. (New York: N.Y.: McGraw Hill, 1975).

[11] James W. Gibson, Charles R. Gruner, William D. Brooks, and Charles R. Petrie, Jr., "The First Course in Speech: A Survey of U.S. Colleges and Universities," Speech Teacher, 19 (January 1970), 16-17.

[12] Gibson, et. al. (1974), 209. It was noted that 42.4% of the respondents to Gibson's 1974 study reported a class size of 18-22 for public-speaking classes; 29.7% stated that section size for public-speaking classes was 28-30.

[13] Gibson, et. al. (1974), 212.

[14] Gibson, et. al. (1974), 214.

[15] Stewart, 7-14.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO THE CATEGORIES THAT BEST DESCRIBE THE EMPHASIS OF THE INTERPERSONAL COURSE*

	10% Emphasis	30% Emphasis	50% Emphasis	Over 60% Emphasis
Intrapersonal	67.0	31.0	2.3	0.3
Interpersonal	12.3	30.9	26.0	30.9
Small-Group	59.2	29.5	8.4	2.9
Public Speaking	45.1	28.6	16.5	8.7
Communication Theory	62.3	27.5	8.7	1.5

* All figures are re-adjusted according to the number of respondents to each category. Intrapersonal n = 347; Interpersonal n = 375; Small-group n = 346; Public Speaking n = 206; Communication Theory n = 334.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO THOSE TOPICS TO WHICH SOME AMOUNT OF TIME IS GIVEN

Topic	Percentage	Topic	Percentage
Verbal	90.7	Persuasion	46.4
Nonverbal	89.7	Ethics	46.1
Feedback	87.9	Family	45.6
Self-concept	86.9	Assertiveness	45.4
Barriers	85.8	Audience Analysis	44.8
Listening	84.8	Transactional Analysis	44.1
Perception	83.8	Interviewing	37.6
Self-disclosure	81.2	Public Speaking	37.4
Empathy	76.5	Intercultural	36.9
Models	76.0	Research	34.3
Theories	75.8	Vocational Communicatn.	29.1
Conflict	70.4	Rumor	28.1
Self-actualization	68.6	Organizational Communtn.	27.8
Small-group Communicatn.	68.3	Sensitivity Training	24.5
Climates	60.6	Bargaining	22.4
Motivation	53.9	Argumentation	22.4
Values Clarification	52.1	Voice and Articulation	18.8

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS REPORTING THE USE OF VARIOUS COURSE MATERIAL AND METHODS

Material/Methods	Number of Schools	Material/Methods	Number of Schools
Handouts	329	Study questions	162
Examinations	324	Video-tapes	162
Exercises and Games	324	Films	164
Syllabi	306	Audio-tapes	145
Supplementary readings	277	Interviews	137
Dyadic encounters	262	Naturalistic/Field Experiments	262
Simulations	250	Transparencies	107
Work sheets	243	Guest Speakers	94
Journals	168	Records	90
Critique sheets	166	Independent study/Internship	53

TABLE 4

TEXTBOOKS USED IN THE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION COURSE

Book	Number of Schools Using Book
Ron Adler and Neil Towne, *Looking Out/Looking In: Interpersonal Communication* (New York, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978).	28
William D. Brooks and Philip Emmert, *Interpersonal Communication* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1976).	19
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John Stewart and Gary D'Angelo, *Together: Communicating Interpersonally* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1975).	7
Others	305

TABLE 5

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS REPORTING THE USE OF THESE GRADING METHODS

Grading Method—Number of Schools		Grading Method—Number of Schools	
Written examinations	321	Journals	159
Class participation	288	Term papers	147
Classroom presentations	256	Oral examination	92
Classroom exercises	246	Contract grading	76

TABLE 6

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO THE METHOD FOR DETERMINING THE STUDENTS' GRADE

	10%	30%	50%	over 60%
Peers	61.0	19.3	6.7	13.0
Self (Student)	42.4	27.5	12.2	17.9
Teacher	3.8	8.5	7.7	80.6

TABLE 7

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO THE APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF GRADES IN THE INTERPERSONAL COURSE

	19% or less	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	over 80%
"A" grade	53.9	24.2	8.0	7.2	3.4
"B" grade	8.2	51.3	28.6	3.4	.8
"C" grade	25.8	40.4	30.9	2.9	0
"D" grade	91.7	6.6	1.7	0	0
"F" grade	93.3	2.0	0.7	2.0	2.0

TABLE 8

MOST OFTEN REPORTED SUPERVISION PROBLEMS AND NUMBER OF SCHOOLS REPORTING THEM

Problem	Number
Class size is too large	22
Maintaining consistency between sections	21
Not enough time (Either class periods too short, or term length inadequate)	17
Insuring that the instructional staff (whether graduate students, part-time staff, or faculty) are qualified	15
Agreement on course content (goals, objectives, or syllabus)	12
Determining grading standards and criteria (including problems in measuring student performance)	12
Supervision of teaching staff (lack of time, problems in evaluating teaching performance)	10
(This category increases to 13 when you add the category of problems in "supervising senior staff" which was mentioned by three respondents.)	
Balancing theory and skills (experiential)	10
Textbook selection	8
Finding adequate classroom space	7
Finding quality materials for the course (both reading materials and exercises)	5
Other departments offer a similar course	5
Serving all students who want the class (too much demand)	5
Getting equal enrollments across sections and time slots (problems in scheduling)	4
Others	106

TABLE 9

MOST OFTEN REPORTED TEACHING PROBLEMS AND NUMBER OF SCHOOLS REPORTING THEM

Problem	Number
Time (not enough of it--either classroom or term)	64
Limitations resulting from student backgrounds	63
--low academic skills	
--extreme differences	
--varied abilities	
Class size too large	55
Grading	54
Student apathy	46
--student involvement (getting them involved)	
--maintaining student enthusiasm	
--motivating students	
--getting students to see course as valuable and relevant	
Confronting student expectations and attitudes about the course	44
Evaluation	35
Textbook	32
--inadequacy	
--unsuitability	
--selection problems	
Balancing theory and performance (cognitive vs. affective)	29
Locating, securing, or making available resources	26
--visual aids, supplementary reading, films, audio-visual material, closed-circuit TV, video tapes, reference material, compatible reading material	

Arranging and finding exercises related to real world	17
--realistic means of application	
--more meaningful application of certain theories	
Inappropriate classrooms	14
Motivating students to see the practical applicability of course	14
--application of theory to their lives	
--getting students to deal with themselves and to examine their own communication	
Determining course content	12
Integrating concepts from exercises (processing exercises)	9
Attendance	8
Establishing appropriate class atmosphere	8
Finding competent instructors to meet the student demand	8
Insufficient funds for films, room equipment, etc.	8
Providing adequate individual guidance (one-on-one conferences for example)	8
Finding fair and objective educational methods of skill development	6
Insufficient interpersonal models for students	6
Anxiety and apprehension of students	6
Coping with the terminology	5
--reducing it for students	
--getting students to use the terms	
Keeping up with the paperwork	5
Lack of consistency between sections of the course	5
Peer (faculty) understanding and acceptance of the course	5
Others	169